

Dear BJ Community,

In the past few days since we sent our letter to you regarding the UN vote, and following yesterday's article in the New York Times, we have heard from many of you. We thank you for taking the time to write or call to express your opinions. The depth of feeling expressed has moved us. Some of you found our words very upsetting; for others of you, the message resonated powerfully.

While we affirm the essence of our message, we feel that it is important to share with you that through a series of unfortunate internal errors, an incomplete and unedited draft of the letter was sent out which resulted in a tone which did not reflect the complexities and uncertainties of this moment. The letter omitted key passages honoring the diversity of viewpoints in our community as well as links to a series of articles in the Israeli press representing a range of opinions on the UN vote (see texts and links below).

In addition, our letter, a "Message from the Rabbis", should not have included the names of our Hazzan, Ari Priven, our Board President, Jeannie Blaustein, our Executive Director, Steve Goldberg, and our Director of Israel Engagement, Orli Moss.

We genuinely love this community. BJ is our home and we have devoted many years building relationships with so many of you. We have achieved a great deal together. We do not take that for granted, and we regret the feelings of alienation that resulted from our letter.

Although we recognize that not all are in agreement with our views, we trust that we will find a way to live with our differences, challenging as that may sometimes be. The three of us are passionate lovers of Israel. We have spent significant parts of our lives there, we have family and friends there, we have traveled to Israel many times with BJ members, and we are unequivocally committed to Israel's security, democracy and peace. We will continue to devote ourselves to the dignity of Israel, of our people and of all peoples. Let us move forward together.

Sincerely,

Rabbis Roly Matalon, Marcelo Bronstein and Felicia Sol

Excerpts from the address by Ambassador Ron Prosor to the General

Assembly, 29 November 2012

Today I stand before you tall and proud because I represent the world's one and only Jewish state. A state built in the Jewish people's ancient homeland, with its eternal capital Jerusalem as its beating heart.

Peace is a central value of Israeli society. The bible calls on us: ורדפו שלום בקש "seek peace and pursue it."

...This resolution will not advance peace.

This resolution will not change the situation on the ground. It will not change the fact that the Palestinian Authority has no control over Gaza. That is forty percent of the population he claims to represent!

This resolution cannot serve as an acceptable terms of reference for peace negotiations with Israel. Because this resolution says nothing about Israel's security needs. It does not call on the Palestinians to recognize Israel as the Jewish State. It does not demand an end of conflict and a termination of all claims.

Let me tell you what this resolution does do.

This resolution violates a fundamental binding commitment. This is a commitment that many of the states here today were themselves witness to. It was a commitment that all outstanding issues in the peace process would only be resolved in direct negotiations.

...There is only one route to Palestinian statehood. And that route does not run through this chamber in New York. That route runs through direct negotiations between Jerusalem and Ramallah that will lead to a secure and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

The truth is that Israel wants peace, and the Palestinians are avoiding peace...

...The UN was founded to advance the cause of peace. Today the Palestinians are turning their back on peace. Don't let history record that today the UN helped them along on their march of folly.

Thank you, Mr. President. Read the whole speech

This didn't happen overnight

by Sever Plocker, Yedioth Ahronot, November 30

(This article appeared in print, and is here translated into English)

The nations of the world did just vote in favor of the Palestinians last night. They also voted in favor of Israel. In favor of a sovereign, independent Israel, separate from Palestine, separate from the Palestinians. By giving recognition to the Palestinian state, the UN gave, for the second time since the end of World War II, its repeated recognition of the Jewish state.

The PA delegation formulated its request in diplomatic language that left no room for doubt: the Palestinian people request to establish for itself a state in West Bank and the Gaza Strip based on the 1967 borders that will live in peace alongside Israel. The sensitive issue of Jerusalem was not mentioned in the operative section of the request and remains open to negotiations between the sides. The same for the issue of the final borders and the settlements.

The resolution passed by the UN is not anti-Israel. It is only seen as such by Israelis who are opposed to the idea of two states. In practice, this could serve as the jumping-off point for pulling the peace process out of the mud. True, unilateral steps are never the best solution, but the recognition that the world conferred last night on the Palestinian state does not constitute a major injury to Israel's vital interests. We can live with it and even derive benefit from it. The benefit—including to Israel—is in setting a new opening point for negotiations: between two nation-states and not between an occupying nation and a national entity living under occupation. The gaps have been reduced in a non-violent way. That, in and of itself, is positive.

The US voted against the resolution. Only Barack Obama, a black and "leftist" president, could permit himself to make such a demonstrative vote without being considered the Palestinians' enemy. Obama wanted to prove — and did prove—that he keeps his word and that he is a true friend in times of trouble. But let's not delude ourselves: Obama will demand a quid pro quo for his country's UN vote. The American pressure is just beginning.

Sixty five years ago, it was the Arabs who rejected, making a crucial mistake, the idea of partitioning the land into two states for two peoples. Yesterday night, so it seems, the Netanyahu government filled the shoes of the Arab rejectionists.

Israel's Birth Didn't Come at UN, Neither Will Palestine's

by Herb Keinon, Jerusalem Post, November 30

The Partition Plan adopted by the UN on Nov. 29, 1947, and rejected by the Arabs, did not give birth to the Jewish state. Jewish blood, sweat and tears during the War of Independence did that. Proclamations are one thing, and a living, breathing state is something else.

The recent battle with Gaza helped sway the world's democracies in PA President Mahmoud Abbas' direction. The EU, which has bet on Abbas and the PA to the tune of billions of euros, cannot sit by and just watch him and the PA tumble. Calls to prop him up became deafening following the Gaza operation and the EU believes a diplomatic victory at the UN is just the thing.

Thursday's vote was also a defeat for U.S. diplomacy. President Barack Obama explicitly asked Abbas not to go through with the move now. Abbas flatly said no and that bald rebuke has to hurt. Will Obama take revenge on Abbas for poking his finger in the eyes of the U.S. president?

[Read the full article](#)

There is a Phantom of the Palestinian State

by Amnon Lord, Ma'ariv, November 30 There is a phantom hovering over Europe, the phantom of the Palestinian state. A phantom, nothing more than that. But together with the phantom of the Weimar Republic, a spirit of defeatism, appeasement and decadence, the atrophy of democracy, we cannot ignore the danger that Abu Mazen represents as the head of his phantom state.

According to international law, the situation is clear. Hersch Lauterpacht, one of the most celebrated founders of international law in the 20th century, once wrote that 'the UN General Assembly does not have any legal authority to legislate or make binding decisions based on recommendations'. The UN General Assembly's decision is only a recommendation. There are legal experts who understood the peril inherent in the UN General Assembly's resolutions with their tyrannical majority. They define resolutions like the one that was made last night are defined as a state of 'illusion'.

However, from the Arab political system's efforts against the State of Israel for many years we know that illusions, propaganda and declarative resolutions all have a cumulative and significant effect on our consciousness. At the end of the day, they are liable to turn into reality. Neither did the Goldstone report have

any legal import; nevertheless, it was a strategic event.

The unilateral Palestinian move is the continuation of their political war to eliminate the State of Israel. It means that they have taken a step further in their de-legitimization of Israel. Indeed, most of the Western world gives support to political warfare whose goal is 'politicide', as Gen. Yehoshafat Harkabi termed it. This move by the 'moderate' Abu Mazen completes Hamas's terrorist move. They have a common goal, but Abu Mazen is capable of recruiting the 'ambassadors of hypocrisy' from Paris, London and Washington to the anti-Israel battle.

Israel cannot permit itself to be passive when confronting this battle. Without revealing its cards, Israel must announce that it will respond to this move in a timely and appropriate manner. Simultaneously, it must request of friendly nations that they upgrade their recognition of Israel. It may be surprising, but in effect not even Canada, the United States and Germany recognize the sovereignty of the State of Israel. It is delusional. At most they recognize its existence or its 'right to exist' in order to appear ethical. But a country that does not recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital in effect does not recognize Israel. The United States and its friends in the international community recognize the existence of a Jewish community in Israel and the need to arm it against pogrom-like attacks, but they do not recognize its full sovereignty. The demand now: move your embassies to Jerusalem.

Read the original article in Hebrew (The excerpt above is a translation.)

What is in the UN Resolution?

by Amos Gilboa, Ma'ariv, December 3

Before the UN resolution passed last week granting the Palestinians observer state status, there were people in Israel who said Israel should support Abu Mazen's bid and vote in favor. A famous playwright wrote that this would reshuffle the cards of war in the entire region, and could change the direction of the winds in the Middle East from winds of war to a breeze of peace. A well-known financial commentator said that if we were to do that, then our relationship with the moderate Arab world and with the leaders of the Arab Spring would change, and that the Palestinian nation would know, once and for all, that the Palestinian Authority is its future and that the Hamas is its past. Statements such as these have been described as "pipe dreams," as being similar to the visions of a "new Middle East" after the Oslo Accords, with Gaza becoming "Hong Kong and Singapore" following disengagement. But these people are allowed to dream, as long as they do not bear any national

responsibilities.

That said, the Israeli government's decision to embark on a crusade against Abu Mazen's course of action and to fire threats into the air was a crude and stupid mistake. It was like a soccer team that purposefully places itself in the same competition as Real Madrid, Barcelona and Manchester United. Obviously it is going to be badly beaten. No excuses can help. The folly of the crusade only amplified Abu Mazen's diplomatic-propagandist achievement and highlighted Israel's failure. And now, like an angry school child, Israel makes mistake after mistake and announces that it is building thousands of apartments in East Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria. Has Jewish wisdom passed from the world? Is stupidity celebrated?

Let us look at what there is and what there is not in the UN resolution from November 29 and in Abu Mazen's speech and what it means. The resolution, in the operative section, approves the two-state vision—the right of the Palestinian nation to self-determination and for an independent and sovereign state that lives in peace and security alongside Israel in the pre-1967 borders. The resolution calls for negotiations for ending the occupation in order to receive just peace between the Palestinian side and the Israeli side that will solve the core issues of refugees, Jerusalem, settlements, borders, security and water.

In Abu Mazen's speech, the following points are noteworthy. First of all, Israel is an aggressor state, its actions are barbaric and it is massacring the Palestinian nation and conducting ethnic cleansing. As opposed to Israel, the Palestinians have humanitarian moral values, and they will always enforce international law. Secondly, he spoke as someone who clearly represents the Gaza Strip as well and is responsible for its future and the future of its slaughtered children. Thirdly, the Palestinians are trying to revive the peace process. They want peace, but they will not give up on their inalienable rights, and will continue to peacefully "resist" the Israeli aggressor and occupier, and he warned Israel that the window of opportunity is narrowing and time is running out.

What stands out the most is what was missing from Abu Mazen's speech to the UN General Assembly. There is no willingness for any sort of arrangement, no call to end the historic conflict, there is no word about "two states for two people" (nor is there any mention of it in the resolution) and even when he brings up the partition plan he avoids saying the words "Jewish state". His hand is not extended in peace. In my opinion, the last thing that militant Abu Mazen, the "father of the state", wants right now is to negotiate with us. We cannot in any way play into his hands. An Israeli declaration about construction just thrills him and angers our friends. This is exactly the moment that Israel needs to take advantage of, without any delays, in order to expose him, or to "smoke

him out", as they say. Now, before the elections, we need to initiate something dramatic, loud and surprising. We need to catch Abu Mazen in his words. We need a little intelligence.

Read the original article in Hebrew (The excerpt above is a translation.)

Netanyahu's missed opportunity

by Shlomo Avineri, Haaretz,

December 4 Following is the speech that the prime minister of Israel should have delivered at the UN General Assembly after Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' address:

"I would like to congratulate the president of the Palestinian Authority on the courageous step you took. In coming to the UN General Assembly seeking recognition of Palestine as a nonmember state, you have embarked on the path toward a historic compromise between the Jewish national movement - Zionism - and the Palestinian national movement.

"We are looking toward the future, but we cannot ignore history. How much pain and suffering would have been avoided, for both peoples, had the Palestinian movement accepted the United Nations' partition plan on November 29, 1947, rather than 65 years later. Instead, the Palestinian national movement and the Arab League waged war not only against Israel, but also against the UN decision...

...This speech, of course, was not delivered. Because that would require courage, wisdom and a Zionism that combines vision with realism - the Zionism of David Ben-Gurion, who led the way to Israel's independence by accepting the partition plan, and of Menachem Begin, who welcomed Sadat to Jerusalem even as he gave up all of Sinai. How painful it is to realize that these qualities, which guarantee these two leaders a place in history, are so lacking in the prime minister of Israel today.

For the full article in English Follow link below the article precis to register for free access to 10 articles a month to view.

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